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The Condition and Perspectives of Polish Political Science in the Beginning of the 21st Century

Summary: The condition of political science in the beginning of the 21st century in Poland is the consequence of a number of factors, the most significant of them being Poland's communist experience (1945–1989), the post-1989 economic and political transformation as well as the changes in the organization of higher education both in terms of teaching and research. This paper covers all of those factors but its main aim is to present the state of Polish political science between 2000 and 2012. The authors present curricular and institutional changes in higher education, the number of universities providing courses in the field of political science as well as the number of students and academic staff. The paper discusses the structural and curricular changes introduced in the period in question following the Bologna Accord and the provisions of the National Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

1. Introduction

For any in-depth and structured reflection on the development of political science it is essential to start with the key questions about the subject being studied, methods and boundaries. Those elements have been discussed within our discipline now for decades and as such there is no need to reiterate those debates here. In this article we adopt the pluralistic vision of political science as a discipline sharing the object of research with other social sciences and humanities. Political science defined this way is enriched by philosophical reflection present in axiological considerations affecting the political sphere, and by historical reflection which looks at trends and development directions in the political sphere from a historical perspective, and by scientific reflection which focuses on drawing observation-based conclusions that can be used in explaining and predicting political phenomena. Such a vision of political science would also see it as a field

concerned with looking for practical applications of theoretical statements in the field of politics, and as such – a basis for rational actions (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011, p. 14). All of those angles complement each other and used jointly and developed in research they translate into the richness of political science.

The main aim of this paper is to present the condition of Polish political science, especially its transformation in the early 21st century (2000–2012). In order to do so, we will investigate the beginnings of its institutionalization, i.e. the early 20th century, all the way up to the turn of the century. We will briefly present the period when political science found itself ideologically constrained between 1945 and 1989 in order to move on to its situation in the times of post-1989 transformations and its condition in the early 21st century. The presentation of this last period will include legal and institutional circumstances of political science and the most significant changes in the number of universities teaching and/or conducting research in the field of political science. We will identify the most significant trends concerning the number of applicants and students of political science and the number of university teachers and researchers including their particular fields of interest. Finally, we will highlight some restrictions for the development of political science in Poland, its challenges and possible scenarios for future changes. The article will focus on two areas in which political science operates, namely research and education. Those two are inseparable, as in Poland the most prominent academic units working in the field of political science operate within the structures of universities as separate institutes or departments conducting research and educating students at the same time.

Majority of data presented in this chapter was published by the authors before (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011; Krauz-Mozer et al., 2012) and is the result of their research carried out between 2010 and 2012.

2. Where do we come from?

2.1. *The roots of Polish political science*

Institutional beginnings of political science education in Poland can be traced back to the early 20th century. However, the tradition of reflecting upon politics is much older and goes back to the works of Paweł Włodkowic and Stanisław of Skarbimierz – the 15th-century founders of the Polish school of international law. At the turn of the 16th century, thanks to the works of Jan Ostroróg, Stanisław Orzechowski, Wawrzyniec Goślicki and Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, the Polish reflection on politics abounded with quite innovative ideas. In the period of Enlightenment, this tradition of scholarly disputes over the shape of

the Republic of Poland and its legal system found its continuators in Stanisław Konarski, Stanisław Staszic, Hugo Kołłątaj and Stanisław I Leszczyński. However, it was only in the beginning of the 20th century that the process of an actual institutionalized development of political science started in Poland. It was then that political science separated from other social sciences as an independent field of study. In 1902, a group of academics from Lviv University created Szkoła Nauk Politycznych (the School of Political Sciences) which marked the moment of including political science in the Polish education system. Another unit providing education in the field of political science was founded in 1911 within the Faculty of Law of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków (Hajdukiewicz, 1977, p. 127). It was called Polska Szkoła Nauk Politycznych (Polish School of Political Sciences) and was later renamed Szkoła Nauk Politycznych (the School of Political Sciences). In 1915, Lviv and Kraków were joined by Warsaw and its Szkoła Nauk Społecznych i Handlowych (the School of Social and Business Sciences), later renamed Szkoła Nauk Politycznych (the School of Political Sciences) and then before World War II renamed again to Akademia Nauk Politycznych (Academy of Political Sciences).

All of the above schools developed partly using their own experiences and partly availing of patterns used in other European universities. The Kraków School was organized by professors from the Jagiellonian University, themselves graduates of L'École Libre des Sciences Politiques in Paris (Włodarski, 2009; Zięba, 2001). The School of Social and Business Sciences in Warsaw was modelled on the university in Leipzig (Loth, 1968, p. 108). The schools in Warsaw and Kraków developed very rapidly after 1918, when Poland regained independence, and they were the two dominant institutions providing education in the field of political science until World War II (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011, p. 57).

Official education in Poland was brought to a halt by German and Soviet occupation. In 1939, official instruction ceased at Polish universities and academics, especially from Kraków, Warsaw, Lviv and Vilnius fell victim to the aggressors' repression. Some were arrested, others were forced to flee the country. Some of those who remained organized secret classes for students. Professors of political science played a vital role in this process. Some of the secret lectures were delivered by academics from the Jagiellonian University, who were also teachers in Szkoła Nauk Politycznych (the School of Political Sciences) (Bartowski, 1970).

After the war, repressive actions against universities stopped for around two years. The political climate of 1946 and 1947 was favourable enough to resume research and educational activities. The limitations were connected with the enormous number of war casualties and material damage caused by the occupying forces. Despite those difficulties, a number of institutions were revived and made an attempt at opening degree programmes with political science in

their curricula. Among those were the School of Political Sciences affiliated with the Jagiellonian University and the Academy of Political Sciences in Warsaw. Subjects connected with political science were also included in the curricula of the universities in Warsaw and Poznań and the newly-created University in Wrocław. As new universities were opening, they added political science to their list of available courses.

But the political changes, in particular the progressing Sovietization of the country, quickly shattered Poland's dreams and hopes for a free and independent higher education. With every passing month, universities were facing more and more problems and limitations and educational activity was becoming dangerous, if not simply impossible. Some institutions tried to readjust by modifying their curricula or introducing changes in their organizational structures (Loth, 1968, pp. 22 ff.). Those schools with political science and economics in their profiles, like the Academy of Political Sciences were nationalized and re-organized, and had their educational profiles changed (Cieślak, 1968, pp. 151 ff.). In 1949, the School of Political Sciences in Kraków was closed down (Zięba, 2001, p. 218). The control over higher education executed by the communist state apparatus and exerted through interfering in the process of teaching, re-writing curricula and pushing a particular agenda, increased significantly.

2.2. Marxist political science in post-1945 Poland

In view of the above, it comes as no surprise that Marxist theories permeated the Polish educational system more and more after 1947. New authorities facilitated this influence, mainly through administrative and legal decisions. These included closing down private universities, awarding high-ranking administrative positions to 'loyal comrades', tailoring the curricula to suit communist ideology and top-down regulation of academic life as such. One of the means of bringing university personnel into submission and also a way of raising new communist consciousness was the compulsory training sessions organized for the majority of university staff in the 1950s (bar professors and senior employees) (Bar, 2009, p. 67). All of this enhanced the feeling of fear and uncertainty among scholars which in turn had a detrimental effect on conducted research and limited international co-operation.

Some academics greeted those actions with fierce resistance. Some resigned, some decided to stay abroad and some left Poland to look for employment in foreign universities. Those who stayed and did not want to partake in indoctrinating the students with Marxist ideology, had to change their field of academic study. Some scholars who had so far researched political phenomena moved to the related fields of history of political or social thought.

The year 1951 marked a conclusive end of political science education following pre-war models (Żukowski, 2006, p. 24), labelled by communists as 'bourgeois science.' Adopting a Marxist concept of science rendered any co-operation with scholars from Western Europe impossible. The western concept of political science did not fit the Marxist theory of social development.

It should be noted that the new communist authorities used all social sciences to promote communist ideology, but in accordance with Marxist concepts, political science was the most instrumental in their plans of indoctrination of the whole society, especially students – the future socialist intelligentsia. This process was realized in a two-fold manner.

First of all, there was the concept of 'creating' new intelligentsia which would be powerful enough to take on the pre-war intelligentsia (Bar, 2009, p. 45). To implement this idea, authorities made higher education more readily accessible to people with peasant and working-class backgrounds. Smaller cities became home to entirely new universities, without any teaching traditions or qualified staff. This led to some pathological situations whereby university degrees were awarded to people who actively supported the new system but lacked a university education. The process was reinforced by creating new profiled universities with the mission of educating the future educators following the ideology of Marxism-Leninism. To serve this purpose, Instytut Kształcenia Kadr Naukowych (the Institute of Academic Staff Training) was established in March 1950 (Bińko, 1996), followed shortly by Wyższa Szkoła Nauk Społecznych (Higher School of Social Sciences, est. 1957) affiliated with Komitet Centralny PZPR (Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party). Both of those institutions were established by Professor Adam Schaff, who was the main ideologist of Marxism-Leninism in Poland at that time.

The other element was moulding political science to suit Marxism-Leninism and then using it to indoctrinate all students in Poland. The main task was legitimizing post-war reality to the general public, while squashing all attempts at studying and explaining it. Research was subject to censorship which was implemented by means of a new set of rules and regulations as to how it should be conducted. In the early 1950s, political science along with all social sciences adopted the guidelines saying that Stalin's philosophy gives a new direction to all human cognition, and as a 'creative inspiration in all disciplines it makes human thought germinate with ideas' (Sochacki, 1991, p. 32). The new political science officially entered higher education institutions in 1947, when the first course was launched entitled 'Studies Into Poland and the Contemporary World'. The subject was informational and ideological in character and till 1950 it was compulsory for all students (Sieradzki, 1948). The following year, all universities introduced a subject called "Introduction to Marxism and Communism." It continued to be taught until the academic year 1955/56.

With the power of Stalinist authorities weakening after 1956, some elements of Western research results were introduced into the Polish university curricula. This trend continued and in 1963 it led to the creation of a subject called "Introduction to Political Sciences" which was less ideologically charged. The subject was introduced step by step, with the number of teaching hours growing steadily until in 1970 it was made compulsory for all students. That same year, another subject devoted to current events was added to the curriculum, called "Lectures in Political Science" (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011, p. 69). In 1975, subjects covered in the "Introduction to Political Science" were 70–80% congruent with scientific communism (Bodnar, 1974).

Following a decision issued by university and state authorities, an inter-university structure called 'Studium' was brought to life. It was a network-based structure whose existence was a necessity forced upon universities by the need to provide ideologically charged education to all students. The rather tardy launch of the "Introduction to Political Science" in some universities was partly due to the staff's resistance. Not all academics were interested in teaching such subjects (Opalek, 1972). The above described endeavours undertaken by state authorities in the early 1970s prove that political science was meant to be a building block of socialism. It was expected to provide the necessary scholarly materials and analyses which would legitimize decisions taken by the government and it was treated as an element in the ideological war between the two political systems of socialism and capitalism (Czajka, 1974).

The units created to teach "Introduction to Political Science" at the main Polish universities merged in the late 1960s to form the Instytuty Nauk Politycznych [Institutes of Political Science], i.e. bodies providing education to MA students and conducting research in the field of political science. This spelled the beginning of the institutionalized development of some university institutes devoted to studies in politics. Those institutes were created at the University of Warsaw (1967), Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (1967), the Jagiellonian University in Kraków (1969) and the University of Wrocław (1969). In the 1970s, more institutes followed (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011, p. 75). MA courses following the new and state-approved curriculum launched at those universities were the actual beginning of political science education in Poland. Courses were offered not only for full-time students, but also within part-time programmes, evening classes and extramural courses. Between 1967 and 1982, 3509 students from various types of programmes were awarded MA degrees in political science, 1683 of whom were students of full-time programmes (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011, p. 80). The graduates increased the number of those qualified to teach subjects connected with political studies but some decided to join the ranks of propaganda and ideology apparatus.

Polish political science profited from a more open course which communist authorities took with the Western countries in the 1970s. For students themselves this meant gaining access to the classic works of Max Weber, Talcott Parsons or Harold D. Lasswell. Drawing from Western research results in the field of political science was not only meant to help Polish researchers enter the international scene but also legitimized the way political science had been researched and taught in Poland so far. Around that time, numerous Polish political scientists advocated tightening personal and institutional relations with scholars studying this discipline around the world. However, Polish political science was still being censored and had to conform to Marxist ideas of science.

Disastrous consequences of the communist rule contributed to the growing social unrest in the early 1980s. This led to strike actions and public demonstrations which gave rise to the NSZZ 'Solidarność' [Independent Self-governing Trade Union 'Solidarity']. The ensuing political conflict along with social and economic crisis divided the community of political scientists. Some sided with the emerging opposition movement and welcomed the increasingly frequent strike actions and pro-change events organized by students, taking the role of advocates and members of the political opposition. Others persisted in justifying the existence of the old socialist system.

More and more critical voices were heard regarding the organization and content of classes. In the case of political science education, the crisis was most visible among students, who boycotted ideologically-charged classes in growing numbers. As a result, classes in numerous universities changed into free discussions. Some universities went as far as suspending the teaching of the most problematic subjects. The old system of conducting research and writing works which would 'prove that the socialist system was perfect' (Chmaj, 1997, p. 27) lost its *raison d'être*. However, it was only in 1989 that all of the old curricula were replaced by new ones.

In 1982, "Introduction to Political Science" was replaced by a less ideological subject – the "Study of Politics," which evolved over the following years. This substitution was another important step in the gradual evolution of political science education in Poland. Even though the way political scientists were trained at universities was slowly changing, some still insisted on teaching Marxism-Leninism to MA students. New journals were published with the aim of actively winning students and academic staff back to the side of the old ideology. All of those endeavours, however, failed to stop the swelling wave of criticism towards Marxist teachings, which were most severely attacked in the late 1980s (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011, p. 117).

Waves of social and political crises that hit the Polish People's Republic proved that the politically controlled teaching of political science failed as a means of shaping Marxist social consciousness or studying and predicting po-

litical processes. It did not rise to the challenge of researching current events as can be inferred from the lack of academic works on the phenomena and events co-occurring with social and political turmoil (Tarkowski, 1994, p. 11). The changes which were taking place in the 1980s challenged the existing ways of providing education, including curricula and Marxist philosophy of researching politics. The theoretical and methodological basis of political science was called into question along with the ontological value of observations and explanations regarding political reality (Zegadłowicz, 1993, p. 61). It became apparent that 'ideologically-driven science, in this case Marxist political science, failed as a means of studying the world around and as a way of scientific legitimization of social democracy' (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011, p. 133).

To summarize, the experiences drawn from political science immersed in the Marxist philosophical and theoretical framework had a significant impact on the shape this discipline took in the second half of the 20th century. While some academics were denied the slightest opportunity for growth and promotion, others were rewarded with higher and higher positions for their loyal efforts in legitimizing communism. Political science in Poland had two distinct faces between 1945 and 1989. On the one hand, there was a trend to conduct research based on Marxist premises, which sometimes took the form of pseudo-scientific defence of communist authorities. On the other, some academics carried out conscientious research, to this day regarded as an important addition to the discipline of political science and its body of work. This dualism was possible because of periods of strict censorship interchanged with years of relative freedom in teaching and researching. Actual development of the field of political science, however, was impeded by the assumption that it should be an element of creating our reality and shaping Marxist political consciousness and consequently a building block of communism.

2.3. Freedom returns to political science research (1989–1999)

Political and social changes initiated in 1989 brought new challenges to be faced by Polish political science which was just setting out on its journey towards models of scientific research accepted in the West. A new set of political circumstances created by the introduction of a democratic system and free market economy translated into new fields of research. This in turn meant that political scientists had to redefine their own position and role in the new reality.

In the early 1990s, a number of institutions which up till then had been teaching "Studies in Politics" did not survive the shift away from the Marxist style of political science and were closed down. The majority of them were organizational units at polytechnics, agricultural universities, medical and technical colleges as well as schools of fine arts. But there were also some universities

that shut down their Institutes of Political Science. Publication of ideologically-oriented journals was discontinued. A considerable number of universities replaced some of their academic staff; people without academic achievements could no longer work with students (Olszewski, 2001).

The entire higher education system – underfunded, conservative, and unable to compete with foreign universities, as it was in the late 1980s (Wiszniewski, 2002) – was now changing dramatically in terms of its legal, institutional, organizational and economic functioning. The new system was no longer state-controlled. With the regained freedom to conduct research, provide education and to create free art, universities and academic staff found themselves in entirely new circumstances. The universities' autonomy kept growing in the following years. Legal solutions were introduced which allowed and defined the process of establishing private universities which would co-exist with the public ones (state-funded). Education was provided in four types of programmes: full-time with daytime classes, full-time with evening classes, part time (weekend classes) and extramural (no classes, only exams). Favourable legal changes soon translated into an increase in the number of universities, the number of new master's degree programmes and the number of students themselves. A university degree was regarded as an asset on the job market (Dąbrowa-Szeffler, Jabłecka, 2007). It should be noted that the new legal solutions played their part in paving the way for some of the following tendencies, not all of them positive: 1) increasing autonomy of universities, 2) a growing number of students, 3) commercialization of higher education, 4) changes in the higher education system structure, 5) problems striking a balance between the growing quantity and falling quality of education (Dąbrowa-Szeffler, Jabłecka, 2007, p. 22). Changes were also visible in the way the education system was funded (Dąbrowa-Szeffler, 2003, pp. 29–30).

Political science – especially as far as teaching is concerned – benefitted from the changes taking place, despite its historical baggage from the communist times. Between 1989 and 1999, there was a slight increase in the number of universities offering degree programmes in political science and a slow growth of interest among students in 5-year MA programmes. In 1989, political science as a degree programme was provided at eight universities and six Higher Schools of Education. Ten years later the numbers changed to nine and four respectively (Olszewski, 2001, p. 194). The first two private universities to teach political science were established in 1993 (Kryński, 2002). More met the criteria to teach political science programmes in the following years and so in 2000 there were seventeen in total.

The growing popularity of political science as a degree programme is more readily visible in statistical data concerning the number of students. In the year following the transformation in Poland, i.e. in the academic year 1989/90, 3486 people studied political science, two thirds of them were participants in

full-time programmes, while the remaining group availed of weekend courses. Initially, the increase in the number of students was rather insignificant when analysed per year (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011, p. 174), but starting in the mid-1990s 'the community of students of political science kept growing, not only in terms of the total number of students but also in the annual growth rate. Within seven years, between 1993/94 and 1999/2000 the number of students grew from 8713 to 47842, which is almost five times more! This period shows a 25% increase per year (between 1995 and 2000 it was 30%!). This means that every year the group of students of political science was larger by a quarter, which was higher than the average for other studies in the whole country' (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011, p. 175). At the beginning of the 21st century, this rapid growth continued and the number of educators grew along with the number of students. One could say it was 'trendy' to study politics.

3. How do we change?

3.1. *Legal and institutional framework for political science in 2000–2012*

Today higher education in Poland is quite diversified in terms of the ownership structure of schools, type of programmes provided and available levels of education. As far as ownership is concerned, there are 'state' universities established by organs of the state and 'private' universities – established by legal entities and individuals. Secondly, programmes provided can be divided into full-time in which at least half of the programme is realized as teacher-contact classes, and part-time programmes. For the third criterion, Poland implemented the Bologna Process guidelines and organizes higher education into first cycle programmes (BA – *licencjat* or *inżynier*), second cycle programmes (MA – *magister*), joined cycle Master programmes (5-years) and third cycle programmes (PhD – *doktor*) (Dziennik Ustaw, 2005).

A major change in the position of political science came in 2011 when it was officially recognized as one of the social sciences (Dziennik Ustaw, 2011a). Previously it had been part of the humanities (Monitor Polski, 1992; Monitor Polski, 2005) and as such in its long history of scientific research, political science in Poland availed of the body of work of such disciplines as history, law and philosophy, which accounted for its humanistic character, so the change was a rather significant one (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011, pp. 40–107).

Fundamental changes in the sphere of teaching were connected with 'liberated' curricula and freedom in naming particular specialized programmes offered by universities. In 2011, Poland started to create and introduce the National Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (henceforth NQF-HE) – part

of the European Qualification Framework (henceforth EQF). The process which had begun in Europe as early as 2004 was scheduled to be implemented in Poland in 2012 (Chmielecka, 2011, p. 119). Adequate regulations came into force in the academic year 2012/13. Standards of higher education qualifications for particular university programmes were replaced with learning outcomes defined for whole areas of knowledge (e.g. social sciences). Such general outcomes are further defined and adapted to the specific character of particular disciplines and university programmes and on this basis the structure of a given programme and subjects to be taught within it are decided upon. This creates a close connection between areas of knowledge and areas of teaching – between knowledge and higher education (Kraśniewski, 2011, pp. 15–17).

Regulations in force preserved the traditional Polish system of academic degrees: Doctor (*doktor*), Habilitation degree (*doktor habilitowany*) and Professor (*profesor*) even though the requirements for those degrees changed over the years.

3.2. Students of political science in 2000–2011

The early first years of the 21st century brought a tremendous increase in the number of students in Poland. In the academic year 2005/06, there were 1.9 million students enrolled. Over the next few years the number slowly fell to reach 1.8 million in the academic year 2011/12 (Figure 1). This decrease was mainly connected with the demographic low (fewer 19-year-old). Higher education in itself did not lose its popularity which is evident from a steady growth in the net enrolment ratio (defined as the share of all people aged 19–24 that are enrolled on university courses), which kept growing from 30.6 in 2000, and 38.0 in 2005 to 40.2 in 2011 (GUS, 2013, p. 30).

In that period, however, the number of students of political science was undergoing more dramatic changes. The first few years of the 21st century took the number of students from a high 47,842 to the record 55,674 in the academic year 2004/05. For the next two years it stayed at the level of around 55 thousand, but then numbers started to drop rapidly in the following years and reached 25,054 in the academic year 2011/12 (Figure 1).

Those tendencies, however, were not uniform for all types of schools and programmes. At the start of the century, the fastest growing group of students of political science was that at public universities, especially in part-time programmes. In 2000/01 there were 16,245 part-time students with the number growing to 22,001 in the year 2004/05, which accounted for 40% of all students of political science in Poland. Slightly slower, yet still significant, growth was visible in the number of full-time students at public universities, starting at 11,007 in 2000/01 and moving up to 16,010 in the record academic year 2006/07. At that time, the enrolment rate for full-time programmes in private

universities was growing more slowly (the number of 4,000 students in 2000/01 rose to 4,891 in 2004/05) while the numbers for part-time programmes were dropping (in 2001/02 there were 16,738 part-time students enrolled in private universities) (Figure 2 and Table 1).

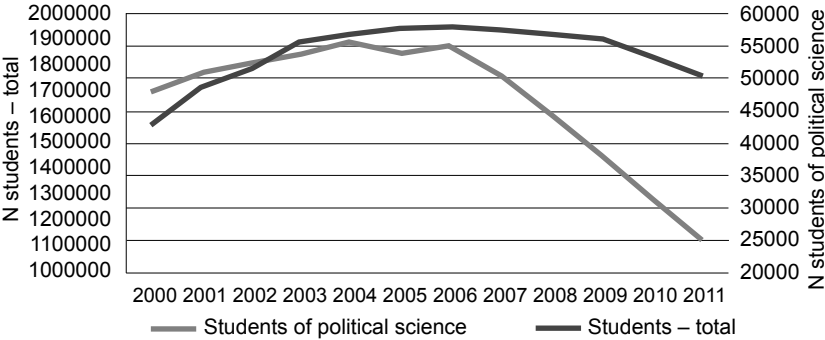


Figure 1: Total number of students in Poland and students of political science in 2000–2011

Source: GUS, 2001–2012.

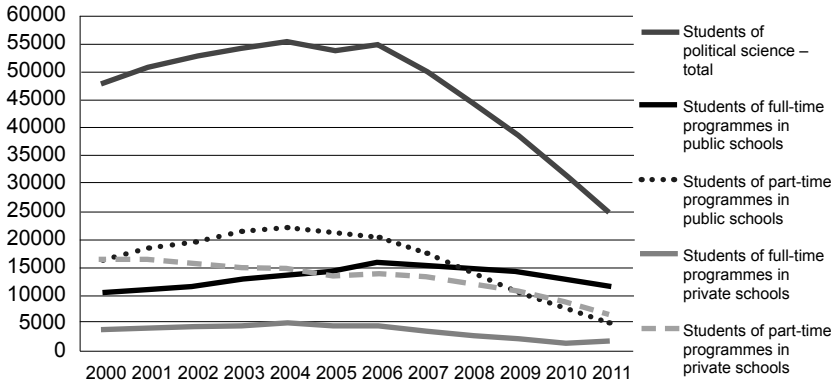


Figure 2: Students of political science in public and non-public schools by form of studies in 2000–2011

Source: GUS, 2001–2012.

Table 1: Average percentage increase in the number of students of political science in Poland and enrolled on different programmes in different schools between 2000 and 2011

	2000–2002	2003–2005	2006–2008	2009–2011
Total	8.783	0.748	–6.15	–17.2
Public schools, full-time programmes	5.169	5.768	1.526	–8.53
Public schools, part-time programmes	13.06	1.914	–12.4	–27.5
Private schools, full-time programmes	9.083	–0.55	–11.7	–17.9
Private schools, part-time programmes	7.186 ^a	–4.51	–4.03	–17.5

^a – the positive number is a result of a great increase in the number of students enrolled in the academic year 1999/2000, which was the reference point for the increase rate in the year 2000/01.

Source: GUS, 2001–2012.

It seems that the early years of the 21st century can be called the heyday of political science studies. Between 2000 and 2002 the number of students grew continually regardless of the type of school or programme. The first signs of crisis, however, were registered as soon as 2003–2005 when the number of students in private schools started dropping. This tendency was not readily visible in the global number of students of political science because of well-functioning public schools. Between 2006 and 2008 it was only full-time programmes in public schools that were still recording growth in the enrolment rate, although they were not at all free of problems and it showed in the years to come. Between 2009 and 2011, the drop in the number of students of political science amounted to 17% annually in the whole country, and as much as 27.5% in the case of part-time programmes in public schools! In light of the shrinking ranks of students we can expect that in the years to follow particular institutes or even whole faculties teaching political science will be closed down. This process has already started. In the academic year 2009/10, 84 schools provided courses in political science (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011, pp. 156–163) but the number began to drop and reached 65 in 2014 (POLON, 2014).

An important question to be posed here is whether these changes are political-science specific. Comparing the rate of enrolment growth and drop among students of political science to students in Poland in general, we can formulate a tentative hypothesis that the situation of political science is not a typical one. This conviction seems more probable when we analyse changes in the number of students of related specializations like European studies, security studies,

international relations or journalism and social communication (Figure 3). In short, the popularity of political science as an academic specialization is in decline in Poland, regardless of the general level of popularity of higher education.

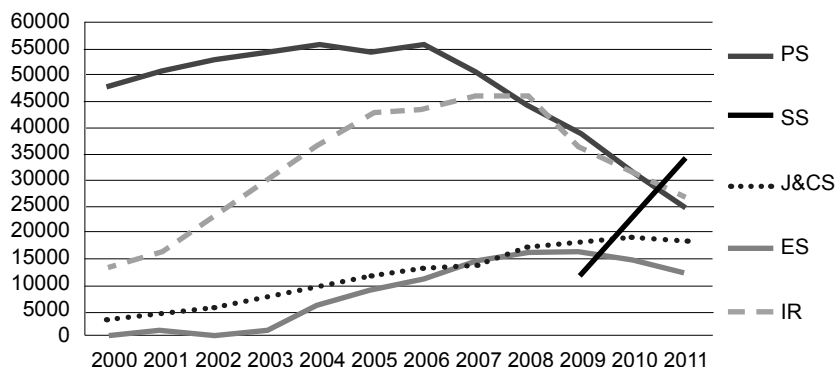


Figure 3: Students of political science and related studies in 2000–2011

PS – Political science, J&SC – Journalism and social communication, SS – Security studies, ES – European studies, IR – International relations.

Source: GUS, 2001–2012, own work.

3.3. Applicants for political science programmes in 2001–2009

To start with, it should be noted that statistical data regarding the number of applicants for particular university programmes is available in Poland only for programmes with more than 10 thousand registered applicants. Figure 4 presents data for political science only up to the academic year 2009/2010, which means that from the year 2010/11 onwards, the number of applicants for full-time programmes in all of Poland was lower than 10 thousand.

Data seems to corroborate the belief that the popularity of political science as an academic programme is in decline. The diminishing number of students is not a result of strict policy regarding the quality of teaching causing some students to drop out before they reach their final year. Neither is it a consequence of a limited number of courses offered because in the period under scrutiny here almost one in five universities in Poland offered programmes in political science. The main reason for the shrinking number of students of political science is their falling interest in this discipline. The total amount of political science students was growing up to the academic year 2005/06, but started declining from the next year on. In the case of full-time programmes, the data is actually alarming when we look at the years between 2006 and 2008, when the amount of applicants for political science programmes dropped by almost 10

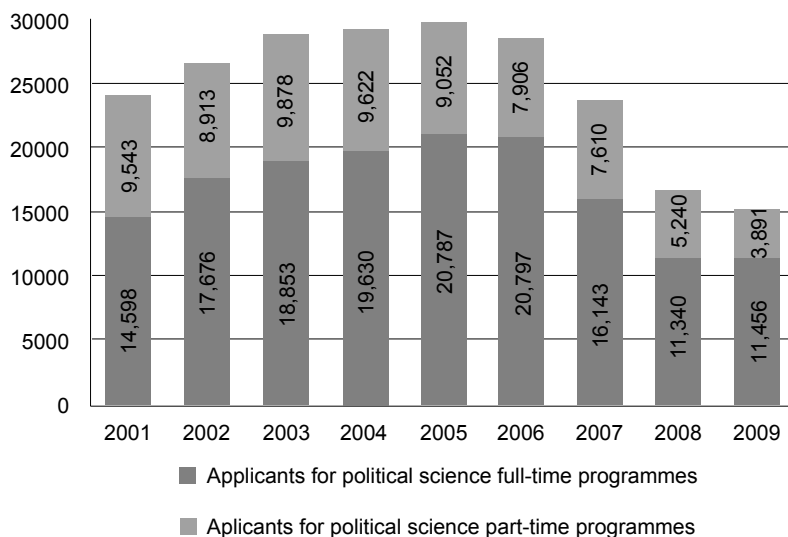


Figure 4: Applicants for political science programmes in 2001–2009

Source: unpublished data from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education; figure prepared by the authors.

thousand. This means that in the year 2008/09 the number of applicants was equivalent to merely 45% of the applicants in the year 2006/07. A similar drop rate is evident in part-time programmes. Unfortunately, there is no available data regarding the following years, but we can be sure that the current situation is definitely not better than in the academic year 2009/10 (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011, pp. 202–206).

3.4. Political scientists – researchers in 2000–2012

Speaking of political scientists researchers we mean those researchers that hold a degree or an academic title in political science. Hence, we exclude here all those who conduct research in the field of political science but do not have formal education in this field.

Let us reiterate here that there are two academic degrees in Poland (PhD and PhD with habilitation) and one academic title (professor). In June 2014 there were 2,388 scholars with an academic degree or title in the field of political science. This number breaks down into 152 professors (including 23 women), 292 doctors with habilitation (including 67 women) and 1,944 doctors (including 808 women) (Nauka Polska, 2014). We can assume that in the year 2012 the total number of scholars was lower by around 270, as the average number of

PhD students of political science awarded PhD degrees in the last few years in Poland has been 130–140 per year. This approximate data suggests that in the period in question the political science community was in bloom so to speak. This is certainly not an overstatement if we take into consideration the fact that a large number of PhD and PhD hab. degrees were awarded at the turn of the second decade of the 21st century. In the record year 2010, at least 155 doctoral theses were written in the field of political science and 33 doctors were awarded habilitation (cf. Figure 5).

The increasing number of scholars is reason for cautious optimism when it comes to opportunities for development in Polish research on politics. However, there is also reason for worry. In the light of a dwindling number of students in political science programmes, we can expect that a number of institutions conducting research in this field will face difficulties, and might be forced to limit the number of staff or else close down altogether. On the other hand, the two trends working together (the growing number of political scientists with academic titles and diminishing number of students) might turn out to be a great opportunity for intensifying academic research, as part of the responsibilities connected with teaching can be lifted and scholars can focus on research instead.

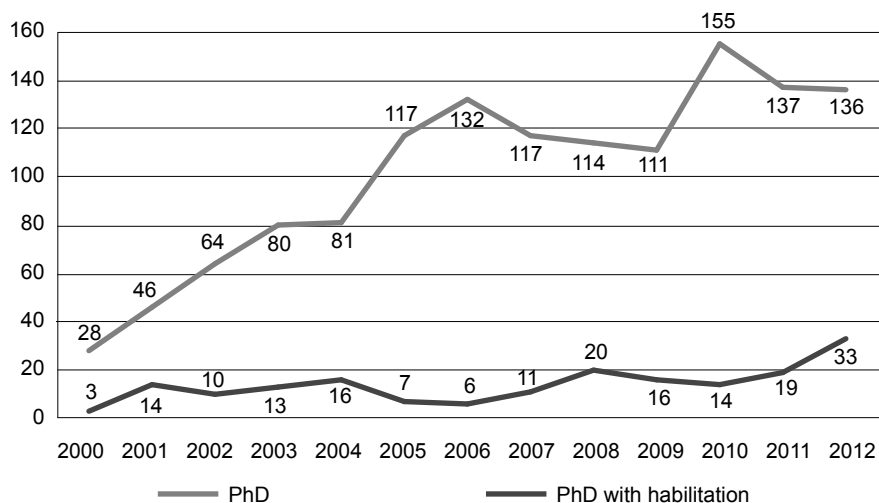


Figure 5: The number of PhD and PhD hab. degrees awarded in the field of political science in 2000–2012

* Data incomplete, no data on PhD hab. degrees awarded in the field of political science in some universities.

Source: unpublished data from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Nauka Polska, 2014.

4. What do we research, what do we teach?

4.1. *The map of research interests of political scientists in Poland*

The map of research interests of political scientists in Poland is outlined in this section based on two types of data. Firstly, we use information collected in 2011 in the Polish Science Database which contains profiles of all academics in Poland including their disciplines, which makes it easy to find all political scientists (at the point when this research was being conducted, there were 2026 entries in the database containing profiles of academics with degrees or titles in political science). Some academics (1581) listed their research specializations, which facilitated identification of their research interests, at least an approximate one (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011, p. 220). Secondly, we also present data collected by the authors by means of surveys (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2012).

Moving on to the analysis of the former type of data, it can be noted that 28.21% of political scientists indicated 'international relations' as their specialization, 11.20% – 'political systems,' 8.29% – 'European studies,' 7.53% – 'social policy,' 7.27% – 'modern history,' 6.58% – 'law' (usually further specified as 'constitutional law,' 'press law,' 'economic law,' 'international law,' 'civil law,' or 'European law'), 5.63% – 'political science' (!), 4.30% – 'political theory,' 4.24% – 'history of political thought,' and 3.61% – 'communication studies' (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011).

This particular popularity of 'international relations' (category) is most likely a result of a large amount of research conducted in this area in Poland, but also the fact that international relations is not a separate discipline, and hence the majority of specialists in this field hold degrees and titles in political science. A large number of hits in this category, as well as in the category of 'European studies', may be seen not only as a declaration of research interests but also as a prognosis of new academic disciplines taking shape in Poland. We need to bear in mind that in the light of existing regulations, neither International relations nor European studies are regarded as separate scientific disciplines.

The above-mentioned categories were declared in similar proportions by scholars holding PhD and PhD hab. degrees as well as professors. A higher number of indications among independent academics (PhDs hab. and professors) was observed in particular in the following categories: modern history, law, and history of political thought. Doctors were more likely to indicate international relations. This suggests a generational change as far as research interests of Polish political scientists are concerned.

Interestingly enough, specializations related to a behavioural approach, such as sociology or psychology of politics, are virtually absent from the database. This is enough to notice a certain idiosyncrasy of Polish political science which remains rooted mainly in traditional approaches related to history and law.

Wishing to broaden our knowledge of research interests defined as 'a set of study objects, conceptual categories and research approaches identified in political science research' (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2012, p. 198), in 2011 we queried respondents on their research interests via questionnaires which allowed them to select multiple answers. 38.7% of our respondents selected international issues, as well as legal-constitutional and institutional ones as the most important. Further selected fields of interests included history (28.7%), political theory (21.8%), sociology (20.3%), philosophy and political doctrines (19.3%), journalism and social communication (16.3%), methodology (11.3%), economy (11.0%), others (8.0%) and psychology. These results coincide with specializations declared in the 'Polish Science Database.' This consistency is also visible in a higher number of independent academics (PhDs hab. and professors) who selected historical and doctrinal issues and a higher number of doctors who selected sociological and communication issues, especially those who have spent less than 5 years working in an academic post (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2012, p. 204).

The above remarks are further corroborated by responses to the question 'If you were to indicate your preferred research approach, it would be...' This was a closed question with eight options, only one of which could be selected (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2012, p. 206). 21.2% of respondents indicated a historical approach. The order of the other options was as follows: institutionalist/neo-institutionalist approach (18.9%), behaviouralist (15.9%), functionalist (12.5%), interpretivist (11.7%), rational choice (8.3%), and normative (6.8%). 4.2% respondents indicated 'other.' As expected, historical and institutional approaches, linked to the more traditional vision of political science were more likely to be selected by professors and doctors with habilitation, as well as those who have worked at a university for 11 years or more. Younger academics, in particular doctors and those employed for less than 5 years were much more likely to select behavioural, functionalist and rational choice approaches. This supports the argument that research interests among Polish political scientists are gradually changing (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2012, p. 207).

The emerging map of research interests within Polish political science is pluralistic, rich, and internally varied, although its core elements – the historical and institutionalist/neo-institutionalist approaches are dominant, as expected (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2012, p. 207).

4.2. Programme content and core subjects taught in political science programmes

In 2000, there were no statutory regulations regarding the content of programmes offered by Polish universities. This state of affairs changed in July 2001 when the Higher Education Act was amended. The Minister responsible

for higher education was granted certain rights, including the right to regulate conditions for delivering degrees, the right to decide on programme names and teaching standards for particular programmes (Dziennik Ustaw, 2001). Less than a year later the Minister for National Education and Sport regulated 69 programmes, including political science (Dziennik Ustaw, 2002). Political science programmes were expected to consist of 240 hours of general subject teaching, 390 hours of rudimentary subject teaching and 900 hours of core subject teaching. General subjects included, among others, a foreign language and IT. Rudimentary subjects included philosophy, economy, general sociology, social psychology, 20th century world history, 20th century Polish history, and political geography. Core subjects included political thought, introduction to state, law and politics, theory of politics, management and social communication, contemporary political systems, parties and party systems, the political system of the Republic of Poland, local government and communities, economic and social policy, international relations, EU law and European integration, as well as political science research methods. In addition, 1,500 hours of elective courses were designed and taught by the institution delivering the programme (Dziennik Ustaw, 2002). It might be said that the curricula of the time placed the political science programme 'primarily in the broadly understood institutional tradition, although content aimed at equipping the political science graduate with a broad knowledge of social sciences and humanities was also present' (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011, p. 233).

In 2007, the above standards were replaced by new ones based on the division between BA and MA programmes. New standards determined the content of 600 contact hours out of the minimum of 2000 to be taught in BA programmes and 315 out of the minimum of 800 contact hours to be taught in MA programmes. This regulated 30% and 40% of the curriculum, respectively. In consequence, a larger part of the curriculum could be determined by institutions themselves. On the other hand, the subjects listed in the regulations were described in detail which limited the institutions' freedom in this respect (Dziennik Ustaw, 2007).

The list of subjects introduced by the new regulations included 4 rudimentary subjects and 12 core subjects for BA programmes and 3 and 7 respectively for MA programmes. For BA programmes, the rudimentary subjects included state and legal studies, political studies, political thought, and political systems. The core subjects included: modern political history, political history of 20th century Poland, the political system of the Republic of Poland, political parties and party systems, public administration, local government and politics, political marketing, social and economic policy, international relations, European integration, statistics and demography, organisation and management. For MA programmes, the rudimentary subjects included the theory of politics, meth-

odology of political science research, social movements, and the core subjects included the history of political institutions, political philosophy and ethics, sociology of politics, psychology of politics, political communication, political decision making, European Law (Dziennik Ustaw, 2007). These changes led to focusing political science BA programmes on issues of state administration, with a particular emphasis on historical processes and law, whilst MA programmes were aimed at broadening this core knowledge to include other social science perspectives such as sociology or psychology. Such curricula seem to be relatively coherent and consistent with the research interests of Polish political scientists presented above, especially with regard to domination of traditional political science approaches rooted in such disciplines as law and history. It is worth remembering that since the academic year 2012–2013, national qualification frameworks for higher education have been in force in Poland. These have lifted general educational standards, giving particular institutions the freedom to shape their own curricula.

The undertaken research indicates that political science programmes were focused on the following issues: law, history, political systems, international relations, management, local government, organisation, public administration, local politics and marketing (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011, p. 242). Further analysis of specializations offered within political science programmes suggests that the main focus is on broadly understood political institutions, and mechanisms of creating and managing the political sphere and its journalistic interpretation, with a consideration for the following dimensions: local government, public, social, European, and international. These help conceptualise the structure of political science as tripartite, consisting of institutions, politicians, and journalists (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011, p. 248). It is within this framework, that political science specializations were shaped at the start of the second decade of the 21st century in Poland.

5. Conclusion

Quantitative data on the number of political science applicants and students is undoubtedly alarming and highlights the decreasing popularity of political science as a university programme. Unfortunately, political science studies have become to a certain extent infamous in Poland in the past few years. According to some commentators and politicians, political science education has become the embodiment of an education that is impractical and undesirable in the job market, while institutions offering political science programmes have been branded as ‘churning out the unemployable’ (See: *WP*, 2011; *Wprost*, 2009; TVN24, 2012). These opinions have not contributed to a good reputation of political

science programmes or of the discipline as such. The situation is aggravated by the fact that the diminishing number of students is likely to become a problem for a number of institutions offering this programme, including redundancies of staff and closures of particular academic institutes and faculties, which may lead to further difficulties, and even undermine the academic condition of political science in Poland.

However, the situation does not seem as critical as it could be surmised. Job market data shows that political science graduates are quite mobile and flexible which results in them finding work relatively quickly (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2011, p. 209). Our surveys show that although 62% of graduates while still at university were worried about finding work upon graduation, over 50% claimed that after university they did not look for work at all, which suggests that they were already in employment, and over 27% found work within a year (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2012, p. 186). Furthermore, studies in political science are perceived by students and graduates as very useful and facilitating intellectual development, critical thinking and independence of views, shaping them intellectually as far as social sciences and humanities are concerned (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2012, pp. 28–29; Wójcicka, 1999, p. 60).

Taking into account the quantitative data presented here, indicating the decreasing number of institutions delivering political science programmes, applicants, students, as well as the increase in PhD and habilitation awards, we seem to be at a key moment of the development of political science in Poland. The decline of the number of (applicants and) students suggests that political science programmes are ‘wrapping up’ which coincides with a marked growth in the number of researchers in political science – PhDs, PhDs hab. and professors, which suggests that the research and teaching community is not merely regenerating but actually developing – at least as far as the numbers are concerned. This last assertion may, however, raise some doubts.

In the Polish higher education system it is impossible to be awarded a PhD in international relations or European studies. The opportunity to get a PhD in communication studies emerged only in 2011. At the same time, quantitative data indicates a sharp increase in the number of students on programmes cognate to political science, such as international relations, European studies, journalism and social communication or security studies. It must be noted that a considerable number of academic staff teaching these programmes have PhDs and other titles in political science.

Hence, we can tentatively observe a wider trend emerging from these statistics. Namely, at the turn of the second decade of the 21st century, an opinion was growing in popularity in the political science academic community that ‘the discipline is in crisis’ which is visible not only in the phenomena signalled here, but also in the fact that ‘particular areas of the traditional research field of

political science are being "claimed" by specializations which often transform into "new, cognate disciplines" and by other disciplines within social sciences and humanities' (Krauz-Mozer et al., 2012, pp. 252–253).

However, these processes are neither unusual nor should they be worrying for that matter. Many other disciplines have gone through the process of formation, solidifying, facing challenges, getting divided, or reorganised. We think that Polish political science is somewhere on the borderline between these problems and challenges and the process of reforming and reshaping the discipline. It is rich in history and tradition, institutional development in the early 20th century, with its experience of being dominated by Marxist ideology, its rebirth and quick institutional development in the late 20th century and early 21st century, and – unfortunately – an equally spectacular decline of the number of programmes offered. At the same time, it is rich with academic reflection, starting with varied approaches and research methods, all the way to diverse research questions, including both the classical historical, formal, legal, institutional, and philosophical aspects, as well as other perspectives.

Polish political science defined that way is facing a number of challenges and limitations.

First of all, at the time of writing (July 2014) the Polish system of higher education and science is being thoroughly transformed as a result of the new national frameworks for higher education qualifications introduced in the academic year 2012/13. It is difficult to assess the consequences of these changes at this point. Getting programme names and the content of education free of ministerial regulations has led to an explosion of unique university programmes in Poland. Increasingly, academic institutions limit or remove political science programmes, replacing them with public policies, internal security, and all kinds of regional studies. A lot of academic staff teaching these programmes are recruited from among political scientists.

Another important point to be considered here concerns the links with cognate specializations and disciplines including international relations, European studies, or communication studies which in the late 2010s in Poland were stressing their independence as separate disciplines more and more, in particular in terms of subjects of inquiry and theoretical perspectives. Without a doubt their subject area and methods are convergent with those of political science. The question which remains open is about the relationship between theoretical assertions made by representatives of different disciplines. Should they be discipline-specific or shared by all? Should researchers form discrete groups, protecting their areas of study and results with secrecy, or should they co-operate and undertake interdisciplinary research in order to understand political issues better? We support the latter option.

Thirdly, the reassignment of political science from humanities to social science as a result of the 2011 regulations, has been an important challenge. It is clear that this is not merely an administrative decision, but an attempt at a certain internal transformation in the form of addressing new research problems. In a way, this goes against the currently dominant opinions on the research subject and methods in Polish political science. This shift must bring about a reflection on new research directions including its methodological background and the shape of the programme curriculum, so that the social science perspective is taken into account to a larger degree than before. This does not, obviously, mean renunciation of the humanities heritage of political science.

Last but not least, the general problem faced by political science researchers in Poland is to do with limited resources devoted to research funding. Poland remains one of the developed countries which spends a relatively small proportion of its GDP on research. This limits the development capability of the discipline.

Overall, the picture of political science in Poland is not a uniform one but contains all kinds of colours and shades. It is bursting with interesting and cognitively valuable research, it has a long tradition, numerous perspectives and approaches developed by numerous academic-educational institutions, but it is also fraught with problems related to a declining interest in the programmes and the currently diminishing number of institutions offering them. The current position of being somewhere between the quantitative explosion and reorganisation of the discipline is without precedence. The political science community in Poland ought to, or even must, develop new directions for the development of the discipline. This "discussion" is already underway, but it is difficult to say when it will end.

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